

The Last

S P E E C H

AND

C O N F E S S I O N

O F

Mr. Stephen Colledge,

Who was Executed at *Oxford* on *Wednesday**August 31. 1681*

A Great many of you appear by your Habits to be men of learning; and for me to make a Confession according to School-Art, I suppose none expect it from me. I am sensible I have had the eye of the World upon me for some little time past, which I here declare was occasioned by my own inconsideration, in hearkening to the allurements of this vain world.

I do here confess to God, the King, and my Countrey, That I have been a great Sinner against God, in my neglect of Duty to his Worship, and my being so much a stranger to his Holy Sacraments, and having so little regard to his Holy Church, in whose Bosom I rest in the midst of my Agonies, through the Mercies and Merits of my Redeemer Jesus Christ, who alone is able to deliver me from the bitterness of Eternal Death; and have hope, by my hearty sorrow for my many Offences, by the Merits of my Redeemer, to be made a Partaker of the promised Life in the world to come.

I have sinned against the best of Kings, in not having before my eyes that Aw, that Fear and Reverence that became me, as a Subject, to the greatest Tyrant in the world. For as His Majesty is the undoubted Father of our Countrey, we ought to pay him Paternal Reverence, and sincere Love; But, on the contrary, I have had too easie thoughts of His Majesty, and have wickedly exposed my corrupt Imaginations, which have been fallly, maliciously and traitterously traduced to the world, thereby thinking to stir up Sedition, and attain my wicked Ends and Purposes; But God, who disposes all things, bounds the Sea, and put a stop to that current of Confusion, which was intended against the best of Kings, and the best of Governments in the world. And I do here desire His Majesty to forgive me the sin that I have acted against Him, that it may not be imputed to me at the Tribunal where shortly I am summoned to appear, before which is Justice and Mercy, without the corruption of worldly Partiality. And I do desire, That all who see this

this my shameful end, or shall hear of it, that they (next to the Fear and Reverence they ought to have to God) to have that Honour for the King and his Ministers, as becomes (not pretended, but) real Loyal and Dutiful Subjects; For I declare to you, That many who use those plausible pretences, never intend to be so in the least action, no further than it supports their Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, of which I have been too guilty, and desire all your Prayers here present, That God in his Mercy would accept this my Confession, with my true sorrow for the same.

I have sinned against my Countrey, in spending most part of my time for some years past in inventing of Seditions, tending not only to the disturbance of its Peace, but to the utter subversion of those wholsom Laws that have been made by our Ancestors, for the steady support, not only of every particular man's Property and Right, but for the support of the whole; and how far such a mischief might have spread it self (had not Almighty God interposed it) is beyond my thoughts to imagine.

Thus, having in general plainly declared the matters I am charged with, and for which I am justly to suffer; I desire God, the King, and my Countreys Forgiveness. It may be expected that I should say somewhat as to the particulars of my Tryal; I do declare, I had more favour shewn me than I could have imagined would be allowed to any person in my circumstances, for which I humbly thank His Majesty's Commissioners, (my Judges) and the rest of the Honourable Court. I do believe my Jury were honest conscientious men; and that their Opinions were governed by the clearness of the Evidence that was deposed against me; and that they had no inbred prejudice against my Person or Perswasion, but discharg'd the Duty every honest man owes to God, his King, and Countrey, and with all patience heard any Defence I could make for my Life; which was very little to the purpose of what was deposed against me, and much less than what I was conscious to my self that I was guilty of.

I cannot object any particular circumstance that I was charged with by any of my Accusers, that is of any weight, and do forgive all the world, and heartily thank those worthy Divines who have spent much time and labour in order to my reconciling my self into the bosom of the Holy Church, in whose Communion I die, and beg the Prayers of all, so long as I have any time lent me; and do hope, that all that ever I have offended, or done injury to, will forgive me, and help me with their Prayers, that I may be the better enabled to approach the Throne of Mercy, which is prepared for all that truly believe, and fear God; which that you may all do, is the Prayers of the poor dying Penitent.

STEPHEN COLLEDGE.

Then, praying some space in private, he submitted himself to the Executioner, who accordingly did his Office. His Body is begged by a worthy Relation, in order to its interment.

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